

Ready for disaster

Town receives oil spill trailer as part of state program

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The likelihood of the next Exxon Valdez running aground in Duxbury Bay is pretty slim, but if an oil spill happens here, Duxbury will be prepared.

The town is one of 11 on the South Shore that recently received an oil spill response trailer from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

Deputy Fire Chief Christopher West called the trailer "a valuable resource for us and everybody in our area."

While the town has a small supply of aquatic booms, enough to contain a

small oil spill, until now a bigger spill would have been a disaster.

The sort of oil spills that the department has dealt with in the past have been of a small scale, said West, sometimes resulting from a car that ended up in the water.

While the fire department now has the equipment, said West, they still have to learn how to use it, so he, and other members of the fire department and the harbor masters office will be heading to Marshfield on Sept. 10 for a training session.

Besides Duxbury, trailers were also delivered to Braintree, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Plymouth, Quincy, Scituate and Weymouth.

In a statement marking the presentation of one the trailers to Weymouth, Senator Robert Hedlund, R-Weymouth noted, "In representing

seven coastal towns on the South Shore, I know how fortunate we are to have such a rich and beautiful natural resource. Given the investment we have made over the years to maintain and protect our coastline, I am pleased that we are now better equipped to more quickly respond and minimize harm in the event of an oil spill."

According to a press release from the DEP, the funding to purchase and distribute the trailers and the equipment is provided from the Oil Spill Act Trust Fund, which has as its source a 2-cent-per-barrel fee on petroleum products shipped through state waterways into local ports.

Each trailer is 20 feet long by eight feet wide and is divided into three storage compartments containing varying sizes and types of containment and absorbent booms; oil

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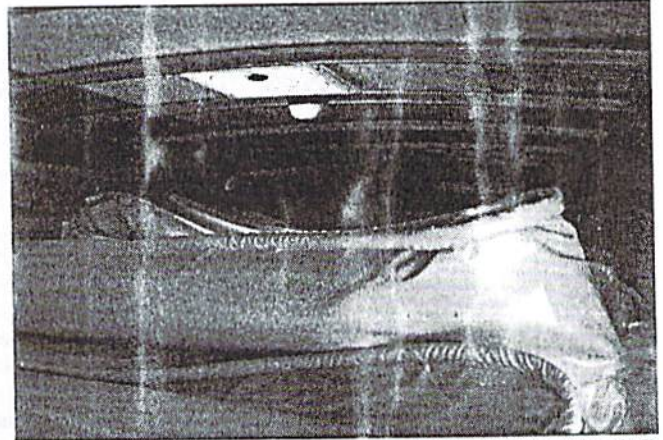
absorbent pads; speedy dry, a chemical which sucks up liquids at accident scenes; inflatable bladders; portable generator; electric air compressor; anchors, anchor chains; buoys; tools, safety equipment, ropes, ties and cables.

The trust fund also provides training and educational programs to local first responders so that they will be prepared should an oil spill occur in their community, as well as access to

current technological databases they need to prepare emergency response plans for their waterways.

According to West, the state will pay for replenishing the trailer if needed.

Legislation to distribute these trailers was pushed forward after 98,000 gallons of fuel oil spilled in Buzzards Bay in 2003. The first batch of trailers was distributed to towns in that area.



STAFF PHOTO/MATTHEW NADLER

Heavy duty booms, designed to contain a large oil spill, are just one piece of equipment inside a new trailer the town received from the state DEP.